

GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND RESEARCHES

HUMANISTIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION: A LOOK INTO THE HUMANE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning has been and is being influenced by number of methodologies. Each methodology works in their own way and tries to bring the best from it. However, it has been practically observed that the relation between a teacher and a student matters more than the methods, techniques and approaches. Good teachers or rather say great teachers and good learners can do miracle through their balanced give and take approach. In fact, great teachers whatever methodology they follow creates humane environment in the classroom and that is very vital to effective education. The result is that the learners, under the conducive and humane environment, self-actualize their learning process.

The present deteriorating education in India is a matter of great concern for one and all. Through this paper an attempt has been made to describe how education can be tackled in a humanistic manner. The paper basically consists of three parts. The first part is devoted to exploring the bases for such a teaching style, relying upon both philosophical perspectives and diverse psychological theories. In this section an emphasis is being made to show how education might promote the growth of the different potentialities of the learner. The second part will discuss how this method might be applied in the teaching learning area to promote holistic development of the students. The third part will look into the growth characteristics of the students and their views after going through such changed education philosophy. This section will look into students' reactions to such approach to teaching and a consideration of some of the weaknesses of this teaching method.

Keywords- Students, Teachers, Teaching, Learning, Education, Humanistic Approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Wikipedia [1] education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research are some of the methods through which education can be imparted and learners may be benefitted. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy. Cambridge dictionary [2] defines it as the process of teaching or learning, especially in a school or college, or the knowledge that you get from this. Similarly, as per free dictionary education is considered as the field of study that is concerned with the pedagogy of teaching and learning.

Humanism can be defined in numerous ways. According to Edwords (1989) humanism is a school of thought that believes human beings are different from other species and possess capacities not found in animals [4]. Humanists, therefore, give primacy to the study of human needs and interests. Similarly, learning-theories.com [5] states that humanism is a paradigm/philosophy/pedagogical approach that believes learning is viewed as a personal act to fulfill one's potential.

Humanistic education (also called **person-centered education**) is an approach to education based on the work of humanistic psychologists, most notably Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. Carl Rogers has been called the "Father of Humanistic Psychology" and devoted much of his efforts toward applying the results of his psychological research to person-centered teaching where empathy, caring about students, and genuineness on the part of the learning facilitator were found to be the key traits of the most effective teachers [6, 7].

The *humanist teacher* is a facilitator, not a disseminator, of knowledge. Participatory and discovery methods would be favoured instead of traditional didacticism (i.e. learn parrot-fashion every thing the teacher says). As well as the child's academic needs the humanistic teacher is concerned with the child's affective (or emotional) needs. Feeling and thinking are very much interlinked. Feeling positive about oneself facilitates learning.

Much of a humanist teacher's effort would be put into developing a child's self-esteem. It would be important for children to feel good about themselves (high self-esteem), and to feel that they can set and achieve appropriate goals (high self-efficacy). This form of education is known as child-centred, and is typified by the child taking responsibility

for their education and owning their learning. The behaviourists might advocate positive reinforcement such as praise, and punishment in the form of negative criticism. Both praise and blame are rejected by the humanists. Children can become addicted to praise, and put much effort into receiving praise from their teachers. Such children will often work for the praise, and not work if their efforts go unnoticed. This is so unlike an interested adult surfing through the internet, which derives satisfaction from learning something new, even though nobody is around to witness this acquisition of knowledge. If education is preparing the child for adult life, it would seem the humanist approach is the correct one.

2. THE PROBLEM & THE WAY FORWARD

Educational deteriorating condition background

Indian education system has deteriorated very much during last three decades. This has created a threat for the social structure of the country. The deteriorating education quality of the country has raised an alarm for the sustainable future of the country. The future young force of the country is marching ahead with lost morale. A situation of anarchy can be clearly seen in the society from the way and the amount of discontent that the youth of today is carrying due to insecure environment. Now once again everyone is talking about improvement in the education system which can help in creating high self-esteem within the youth. Now everyone is talking about humanistic approach to education. Such humanistic approach and student under the humane environment will definitely change the social environment that will create environment conducive for living.

Today, our education system is producing a large number of graduates, normal as well as engineering graduates that are unemployable. The problem with the education system is that we are still sticking to the old curricula irrespective of the fact that the world has changed now. The very purpose of education at all levels of education like elementary, primary, secondary, graduation, post graduation and research has been losing its meaning since the commercialization and politicization of the education system started. This needs to be changed at the earliest. The education of today is not good enough to create a human being. It has the capacity and strength of building an unemployed youth force. Having observed the education system for long it can be said the present education system is a big stumbling block in the way of inclusive growth of a human being.

Humanistic Approach to Education: the Future Solution

It is being realized of late that humanistic approach to education can be one good step forward that will help in overcoming the long-standing anarchy situation in the education system in particular and in the society in general. Things will definitely take time but a smart step now will create history in future. Humanistic approach to education should start right at the elementary level to align the student on education track. Once the student understands the very purpose of educating self things will start moving on the right track.

Gage and Berliner (1991) have given five basic objectives of the humanistic view of education:

1. promote positive self-direction and independence (development of the regulatory system);
2. develop the ability to take responsibility for what is learned (regulatory and affective systems);
3. develop creativity (divergent thinking aspect of cognition);
4. curiosity (exploratory behavior, a function of imbalance or dissonance in any of the systems); and
5. An interest in the arts (primarily to develop the affective/emotional system).

Again, according to Gage and Berliner (1991) some basic principles of the humanistic approach that were used to develop the objectives are:

1. *Students will learn best what they want and need to know.* That is, when they have developed the skills of analyzing what is important to them and why as well as the skills of directing their behavior towards those wants and needs, they will learn more easily and quickly. Most educators and learning theorists would agree with this statement, although they might disagree on exactly what contributes to student motivation.
2. *Knowing how to learn is more important than acquiring a lot of knowledge.* In our present society where knowledge is changing rapidly, this view is shared by many educators, especially those from a cognitive perspective.
3. *Self-evaluation is the only meaningful evaluation of a student's work.* The emphasis here is on internal development and self-regulation. While most educators would likely agree that this is important, they would also advocate a need to develop a student's ability to meet external expectations. This meeting of external expectations runs counter to most humanistic theories.
4. *Feelings are as important as facts.* Much work from the humanistic view seems to validate this point and is one area where humanistically-oriented educators are making significant contributions to our knowledge base.

5. *Students learn best in a non-threatening environment.* This is one area where humanistic educators have had an impact on current educational practice. The orientation espoused today is that the environment should be psychologically and emotionally, as well as physically, non-threatening. However, there is some research that suggests that a neutral or even slightly cool environment is best for older, highly motivated students

3. THE OUTCOME OF THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH

Keeping in view the deteriorating education system it seems appropriate to move for humanistic approach to education. Following the path of humanism in education field one can be very much assured that what we have lost among students and teachers in the present education like ethical and moral values, morale, and tolerance among students will be restored. These are the pillars for a strong society. This will help us in imparting education in a better way and at the same time will enable us to deal with other social issues such as inequality, access to quality education, etc. Humanistic approach to teaching and learning will help in attaining self-actualization which is what the prime focus of education is. This is well supported by the philosophers like Rogers too

4. IMPLICATION OF THE SOCIETY

Humanism believes that the student's self-actualization and the creative ability are their vital factor for their behavior. Humanism psychology allows teachers to be humanistic in their approach and this enables students to learn things in a very humane environment which helps in developing creative ability in the students. This is good both for a health society and environment

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, humanistic education is the need of the hour seeing the deteriorating condition of the education everywhere in the world including India. In India the situation has worsened in the past three decades or so. Ethics and the moral values always formed the part of our education system in the past, besides teaching carried out in the humane environment. In the recent time what we find that the students have lost their morale and are also becoming more intolerant. Such situation can be best handled by following the humanistic approach to teaching. In summary, the purpose of humanistic education is to provide a foundation for personal growth and development so that learning will continue throughout life in a self-directed manner

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors are thankful to the Director Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad for permitting us to publish this paper on a very important topic

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